

BALLARAT FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB.

NEWS SHEET NO. 9 FEBRUARY, 1975.

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EXCURSION: Mt. Cole Forest. 9th February, 1975.

Leave Crookers at 9.30 a.m. and travel to the Mt. Cole forest via Beaufort. An afternoon meeting place may be arranged for those unable to attend in the morning. The Geelong Field Naturalists Club spent the weekend of 18/19 January at Mt. Cole, in the western area of the forest where much of interest was seen and 74 species of birds were listed.

TONIGHT: Our guest tonight is Dr. J. H. Willis, who shall speak to us on his central and northern Australian trip last year.

NEXT MEETING: 7th March will be our Annual Meeting and Members Night. All positions of office-bearers and committee members will be declared vacant and nominations are now required for these for 1975/6. Written nominations can be given to the Secretary tonight, during the month, or at the March meeting.

NEXT EXCURSION: This will be in the Mt. Erip area, in the Linton-Cape Clear region. It is a very interesting area, having vegetation such as red gums and ironbarks, seldom found closer to Ballarat.

SYLLABUS 1975 - 1976: This is now being prepared, but any further suggestions for speakers and excursions will still be welcome and may be able to be incorporated in the programme.

V.F.N.C.A.: The next meeting of the Victorian Field Naturalists Clubs Association will be held at Geelong over the long weekend in March (8 - 10th). This will be the same weekend as our excursion. The Geelong F.N.C. has arranged an interesting programme, with visits to Queen's Park, Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, Paraparap and the You Yangs. The V.F.N.C.A. is an Association of Clubs from the whole of Victoria, and is totally separate from the Western Victorian F.N.C.A. The next meeting of the W.V.F.N.C.A. will be held at Port Campbell over the weekend March 22 - 23rd and will be hosted by the Timboon F.N.C. Our Club is a member of both these Associations and our members are welcome to attend any meetings and excursions.

STONELEIGH: Those who visited Stoneleigh on our November excursion last year will be interested to know that there are many waterfowl nesting there at present. One of the most interesting is a blue-billed duck with ten ducklings - a large clutch indeed for a bluebill. Musk ducks, grey teal, black ducks and dusky moorhens have also nested. Huge flocks of ibis roost nightly on the lakes and so Stoneleigh is a real water-bird haven. Another interesting observation there, is that the frogmouths are again nesting outside the homestead kitchen window. It is unusual for these birds to have two clutches, according to Mr. Ivan Tiley, our expert on nocturnal birds.

BONESEED: The Club has received a questionnaire on Boneseed from the W.V.F.N.C.A. Anyone who knows of any areas infested by boneseed is asked to get in touch with Mr. Fry, so that the form can be completed and information sent to the W.V.F.N.C.A. to deal with. If you are not familiar with boneseed, Roger Thomas has plenty of illustrated pamphlets giving details. To appreciate the danger of this pest, take a trip to the You Yangs with the Victorian F.N.C.A. on 10th March, when the Geelong F.N.C. will show visitors the devastation caused.

ALPS BOOK: Mr. Fry has a few copies of the excellent book "The Alps at the Crossroads" for sale. Several members ordered this book at the last meeting and all agree that it is a first-class book.

NIGHT-HERONS: There have been several reports of immature nankeen night-herons close to Ballarat recently, and one was pictured in the Courier as a "mystery bird". These immature birds are somewhat like bitterns; the adults are quite different in colour.

HOLIDAYS: Over the last couple of months several members have been away to such places as Mt. Tambora (Cape Island Alps), Tasmania, Port Island, Mud Islands and they may hear more about their travels on members night.

